

Message Text

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ACTION SCSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1135

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 LIMA 6775

E.O. 11652: N/A

T: CASC (SLAYMAKER, JOHN AND ROURKE, MICHAEL, J.)

SUBJ: JOHN SLAYMAKER, MICHAEL K. ROURKE

REF: STATE 181753 AND PREVIOUS

SUBMITTED HERewith FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S AND INTERESTED PARTIES
INFORMATION IS A CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME OF THE EVENTS RELATED TO THE
DISAPPEARANCE AND PRESUMPTION OF DEATH OF MESSRS. JOHN CURRY
SLAYMAKER AND MICHAEL JOSEPH ROURKE PREPARED ON THE SCENE BY A
U.S. AID OFFICER AND PERSONAL FRIEND OF THE MISSING PERSONS.

JULY 13 MIKE ROURKE, CURRY SLAYMAKER, RYAN GOODMAN AND MIKE
LAZZARI LEFT BASE CAMP (ABOVE LAGUNA PARON, 5100 M.)
AT 8:00. SLAYMAKER AND ROURKE CLIMBED THE SMALL PEAK
SOUTH OF NEVADO PARON AND MET GOODMAN AND LAZZARI ON
THE SADDLE OF NEVADO PARON AT 12:00. N.B. THIS RIDGE
FORMS THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE. THEY STARTED AS TWO
ROPES OF TWO UP THE SOUTH RIDGE OF NEVADO PARON, IN
60 CM. OF SOFT SNOW.

AT 14:00, ACCORDING TO GOODMAN AND LAZZARI WHO
WERE 20 M. BEHIND ROURKE AND SLAYMAKER, SLAYMAKER SLIPPED,
A FEW METERS, DISAPPEARED TO THE EAST OVER THE CORNICE
AND THEN PULLED ROURKE WITH HIM.

GOODMAN AND LAZZARI TRIED, BUT DUE TO SOFT SNOW, WERE
UNABLE TO LOOK OVER THE CORNICE TO DETERMINE THE FATE OF
THE OTHER TWO, THEY SHOUTED BUT HEARED NO REPLY.

AT 15:00 GOODMAN AND LAZZARI STARTED THEIR DESCENT TO HUARAZ.

JULY 14 AT 16:00 GOODMAN AND LAZZARI ARRIVED IN HUARAZ, WHERE
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THEY CONTACTED THE LOCAL ANDINE CLUB AND PARQUE NACIONAL.

AT 23:00 LAZZARI, GOODMAN, MOSHE SAVIR AND EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE PERUVIAN ANDINE CLUB SET OFF BY TRUCK FOR THE LAGUNA PARON TO CLIMB TO THE SITE OF THE ACCIDENT AND RAPPEL OFF THE CORNICE TO SEE IF THERE WERE ANY POSSIBILITY OF A RESCUE.

JULY 15 AT 6:30 THE GROUP ARRIVED AT THE LAGUNA PARON, CROSSED THE LAKE AND BEGAN TO CLIMB. AT THIS POINT SAVIR RETURNED TO HUARAZ TO VIEW THE EAST SIDE BY AIR, SEND A RESCUE PARTY TO THE EAST SIDE AND IF NECESSARY TO SEND MORE EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL TO THE FIRST RESCUE PARTY.

AT 14:00 A PLANE WAS SENT TO VIEW THE EAST SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN, BUT BROUGHT BACK NO INFORMATION.

21:00 - 24:00 SAVIR ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO GET A HELICOPTER.

JULY 16 AT 10:00 A GROUP OF SEVEN LEFT HUARAZ BY TRUCK TO THE LLANGUNU CON PASS IN ORDER TO APPROACH AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE THE EAST SIDE OF NEVADO PARON. THIS ROUTE ENTAILED A 25 KM. WALK TO THE FOOT OF THE GLACIER OF NEVADO PARON.

AT 12:00 SR. PONCE FROM THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE NATIONAL PARK IN LIMA ARRANGED A HELICOPTER FLIGHT TO THE ACCIDENT SITE FOR THE NEXT DAY.

THAT EVENING THE FIRST RESCUE GROUP REPORTED THAT THE TEAM WAS UNABLE TO REACH THE ACCIDENT SITE THAT DAY. MEANWHILE NEWS WAS ALSO RECEIVED THAT A GROUP OF SPANISH CLIMBERS HAD AN ACCIDENT AND NEEDED RESCUE AND MEDICAL ATTENTION.

JULY 17 AT 7:00 THE EAST SIDE RESCUE TEAM ARRIVED AT THE FOOT OF THE GLACIER AT THE BASE OF THE EAST OF NEVADO PARON. THEY BEGAN TO CLIMB, MADE SIGNAL FIRES IN THE HOPE OF ELICITING A RESPONSE FROM ROURKE AND SLAYMAKER, BUT SAW NO SIGNS OF THEM. FROM A SMALL PEAK IN FRONT OF THE GLACIER THE RESCUERS OBSERVED THE SITE OF THE ACCIDENT. THERE APPEARED TO BE 250 M. OF 75 DEGREES ICE FLUTES UNDER THE CORNICE, FOLLOWED BY 150M. OF A 75 DEGREE ROCK AND THEN THE BEGINNING OF AN EXTREMELY BROKEN GLACIER. THE GROUP WAS UNABLE TO FIND A SAFE ASCENT OF THE GLACIER, UNCLASSIFIED

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THE ONLY FEASIBLE POINT WAS SUBJECT TO FREQUENT AVALANCHE HAZARD. IN ADDITION, THIS GROUP WAS NOT EQUIPPED OR EXPERIENCED FOR HIGHLY TECHNICAL GLACIER TRAVEL; SO THEY WERE FORCED TO RETURN TO HUARAZ.

AT 10:00 AN ALOUETTE II HELICOPTER BELONGING TO GRUPO NO. 3 OF THE FUERZA AEREA PERUANA ARRIVED IN HUARAZ AND WENT TO THE SCENE OF THE SPANISH ACCIDENT WHERE IT CRASHED WHILE ATTEMPTING TO LAND.

AT 18:00 TWO MORE HELICOPTERS WERE ALLOCATED FOR THE NEXT MORNING. PLANS WERE FORMED TO LAND MEMBERS OF A NEWLY ARRIVED AMERICAN GROUP FROM PITTSBURGH, ON THE EAST SIDE OF NEVADO PARON.
MEANWHILE THERE WAS NO MORE INFORMATION FROM THE GROUP ON THE PARON WEST SIDE.

JULY 18 AT 8:00 A RECONNAISSANCE AIRPLANE FLIGHT WAS LAUNCHED TO DETERMINE THE BEST USE OF THE HELICOPTERS. HOWEVER, POOR WEATHER NEARLY FORCED AN ACCIDENT AND GROUNDED THE ONE HELICOPTER WHICH HAD ARRIVED.

AT 15:00 A GROUP OF FIVE AMERICANS WERE DROPPED OFF AT THE ROAD HEAD IN THE LLANGUANUCO AND STARTED THE 25 KM. HIKE TO THE EAST FACE OF NEVADO PARON.

AT 19:00 THE FIRST RESCUE GROUP RETURNED FROM THE EAST SIDE AND REPORTED THE CONDITIONS. BASED ON THAT INFORMATION A GROUP OF FOUR AMERICANS ORGANIZED THEMSELVES TO BE FLOWN BY HELICOPTER AS NEAR AS POSSIBLE TO THE GLACIER AT THE BASE OF THE EAST FACE OF THE NEVADO PARON. THIS FLIGHT WAS DEPENDANT UPON THE WEATHER AND THE INCLINATION OF THE PILOT.

TWO MEMBERS OF THE WEST TEAM RETURNED TO HUARAZ REPORTING TWO CASES OF OPTHAMALIA IN THEIR TEAM.

JULY 19 AT 7:00 THE HELICOPTER FLEW THE FOUR AMERICANS AND SHAUL LEV, A MEMBER OF THE FIRST RESCUE GROUP TO THE EAST SIDE. DUE TO THE HIGH ALTITUDE AND THE HELICOPTER'S WEIGHT LIMITS ON GASOLINE THERE WAS LIMITED FLYING TIME. WITH GOOD WEATHER CONDITIONS, THE HELICOPTER WAS ABLE TO FLY ABOVE THE NEVADO PARON AND HAD A CLOSE VIEW OF THE ACCIDENT SIE.

IT WAS NOTED THAT ANY APPROACH TO THE MOUNTAIN BY FOOT WOULD BE DIFFICULT AND TIME CONSUMING.

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THE HELICOPTER LANDED BELOW THE ICE (5 KM. AWAY FROM THE SITE) AND DROPPED THREE PEOPLE AND THEIR EQUIPMENT. THE HELICOPTER RETURNED TO THE MOUNTAIN AND SPENT MORE TIME SURVEYING THE ACCIDENT SCENE.

IN THE HELICOPTER WERE SHAUL LEV, JAY HELMAN LEADER OF THE PITTSBURGH EXPLORERS GROUP AND BOB BROUGHTON, MEMBER OF THE PITTSBURGH GROUP.

AFTER FLYING THE SITE OF THE ACCIDENT FROM ALL ANGLES FOR ABOUT 30 MINUTES, THEIR OBSERVATIONS WERE: 1) ON

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-02 ARA-10 /013 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1136

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THE RIDGE TRACKS LEAD TO A POINT WHICH HAD BEEN FLATTENED BY MANY FOOT PRINTS, AND ABOVE IT THERE WERE NO FURTHER TRACKS, 2) DIRECTLY BELOW THIS POINT ON THE EAST FACE WAS A CORNICE WHICH OVERHUNG A 75 DEGREE FLUTED ICE SLOPE OF 250M. AND BELOW IT WAS LESS STEEP 150M. ROCK BAND AND UNDER IT WAS A LOW ANGLED SNOW FIELD 200M. IN LENGTH, 3) ON THIS SNOW TRACES OF FALLING OBJECTS WERE CLEARLY SEEN. THESE TRACES ENDED ABRUPTLY IN A CREVASSE, 4) BELOW THIS CREVASSE WAS A BROKEN GLACIER WHICH EXTENDED MORE THAN 2 1/2 KM.

ACCORDING TO THESE OBSERVATIONS, THEIR CONCLUSIONS WERE: 1) THE POINT OF THE FALL WAS DETERMINED BY THE FLATTENED AREA WHERE (LAZZARI AND GOODMAN - WEST TEAM) ATTEMPTED TO LOOK FOR MIKE ROURKE AND JOHN SLAYMAKER.

2) THE TWO VICTIMS MUST HAVE FALLEN TO THE SNOW SLOPE WHICH MEANT A FALL OF 250M. DOWN THE ICE SLOPES AND A 150M. DOWN THE ROCK BAND, PROBABLY BOUNCING, TO THE SNOW SLOPE ABOVE THE CREVASSE.

3) EITHER THE VICTIMS WERE BURIED IN THE SNOW FIELD OR HAD LANDED IN THE CREVASSE.

4) AN ATTEMPT TO REACH THE SNOW FIELD FROM BELOW WOULD BE PROBLEMATIC, AT LEAST ONE AND A HALF DAYS OF DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS

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PAHOPTQ DR SPHET#RESCUE

TEAM, EXPOSED TO CONSIDERABLE AVALANCHE DANGER. WITH NO IMMEDIATE POSSIBILITY OF CLIMBING THE SNOW FIELD THE GROUP RETURNED TO HUARAZ.

IN HUARAZ, BASED ON THE ABOVE INFORMATION, THE HELICOPTER TEAM, MOSHE, AND MR. PONCE DECIDED TO BRING THE RESCUE TEAM BACK TO HUARAZ WITH NO

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FURTHER ACCIDENTS. NONETHELESS MOSHE DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE ACCIDENT SITE BY PLANE TO CONFIRM THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE HELICOPTER TEAM.

THE HELICOPTER TEAM THEN FLEW TO THE BASE CAMQY (5000M.) ON THE WEST SIDE OF NEVADO PARON TO EVACUATE THE SNOW BLINDED CLIMBER.

AT 12:00 MOSHE FLEW TO THE ACCIDENT SITE, CIRCLED THE MOUNTAIN FOR 90 MIN. USING HIGH POWERED BINOCULARS, AND CONFIRMED THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE HELICOPTER TEAM. ONLY THEN WAS THE SECOND EAST GROUND TEAM CALLED BACK TO HUARAZ. LATE THAT AFTERNOON IN HUARAZ, MOSHE, MR. PONCE AND OTHERS DECIDED TO CALL A MEETING OF ALL THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESCUE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO CONTINUE THE RESCUE.

MEANWHILE THEY SOUGHT PERMISSION FROM THE AUTHORITIES IN LIMA TO USE THE HELICOPTER AGAIN AND MAKE A THIRD OBSERVATION OF THE ACCIDENT SITE.

24:00 THE SECOND EAST GROUND TEAM ARRIVED IN HUARAZ.

JULY 20 08:00 WHILE WAITING AT THE AIRSTRIP FOR PERMISSION FOR THE HELICOPTER FLIGHT, THE PILOT DISAGREED WITH THE NECESSITY OF A THIRD FLIGHT SAYING FURTHER RISK TO THE HELICOPTER, ITS CREW, AND THE RESCUE TEAM WAS NEEDLESS. BASED ON THE PILOTS OPINION THE THIRD FLIGHT WAS CANCELLED.

AT 10:00 A MEETING WAS HELD CONSISTING OF MR. PONCE, OF THE AGRICULTURE MINISTRY, MARCO ZAPATA OF ELECTROPERU, GLORIA CACERES OF THE CLUB ANDINISTA, MOSHE SAVIR, SHAUL LEV, PADRE AGUSTIN DE LOS PINOS, JOHN BOUCHARD OF THE AMERICAN GROUP, DR. BLASS OF THE PARQUE NACIONAL HUSCARAN, AND ING. (NAME UNKNOWN) CHIEF OF THE AGRICULTURE DEPT. IN HUARAZ.

IT WAS THE OPINION OF THE GROUP THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT MIKE ROURKE AND CURRY SLAYMAKER COULD SURVIVE SUCH A FALL, AND THAT IF THEY DID SURVIVE THE FALL AND THEY DID NOT SUCCEED IN TAKING THEMSELVES OFF THE GLACIER (AND ALL EVIDENCE INDICATES THIS DID NOT OCCUR) THEY COULD NOT SURVIVE EIGHT DAYS ON THE GLACIER PARTICULARLY WITH INJURIES.

AT THIS POINT THE GROUP DECIDED TO STOP THE RESCUE OPERATION. THERE REMAINED THREE POSSIBILITIES:

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1) TO CLOSE THE CASE 2) TO SEND A WELL SUPPORTED TEAM TO FIND THE BODIES 3) TO RECOVER THE BODIES. THE LATER TWO REQUIRED A SKILLED TEAM (NOT READILY AVAILABLE) WILLING TO UNDERGO THE HIGH RISKS INVOLVED IN LOCATING THE BODIES AND BRINGING THEM DOWN.

ALL THOSE PRESENT AGREED THAT IN LIGHT OF THE

RISKS INVOLVED IN THE SECOND AND THIRD POSSIBILITIES,
THE FIRST POSSIBILITY COULD ONLY BE CHOSEN.
WE WILL KEEP DEPARTMENT ADVISED OF PERTINENT
DEVELOPMENTS.
DEAN

NOTE BY OC/T: (##)TEXT AS RECEIVED.

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